

CONSERVATION ORIENTED CANDI- DATES SOUGHT FOR SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARDS

January 7, 2002 Deadline

Here's your chance to help protect and improve Utah's land and water. The Utah Soil Conservation Commission is now taking nominations for two of the five elected board member positions on each of the 38 Soil Conservation Districts (SCD) across the state. These boards make important decisions on programs affecting local soil, water and related natural resources on private lands. These programs have a direct impact on the health of our environment and quality of life now and the future. An SCD is a dependent special service district with authority under Utah Code 17A.

Cary G. Peterson, Commissioner of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, and chair of the Utah Soil Conservation Commission said, "Voters have the opportunity to nominate and elect individuals who will direct the programs and activities of Utah's 38 Soil Conservation Districts."

Soil Conservation Districts are governed by a board of five citizens elected by their peers in a special election conducted by mail. Board members serve a four-year term of office. Commissioner Peterson announced that there are three positions up for election in all the SCDs in the state. SCD board member candidates are nominated locally, either by a nominating committee, which consists of the chairs of the county commission/council, USDA Farm Service Agency county committee, the SCD, and the county agricultural extension agent. Or, they can be nominated by public petition submitted by six or more registered voters living within the SCD boundaries. Nominations by petition are due at the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food by January 7, 2002. Ballots will be mailed the latter part of January.

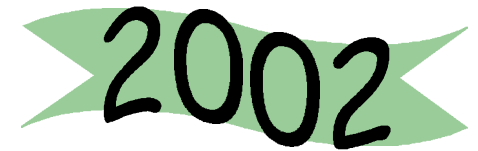
To satisfy the legal requirements a candidate must be at least 18 years of age and be a resident of the Soil Conservation District in which they will serve. Each candidate is provided a summary of duties and must sign a Commitment to Serve Form confirming their willingness to serve, if elected. It would be beneficial if a candidate understands land management systems and conservation treatment techniques. Even better, it would be helpful if the candidate understands the makeup and duties of the SCD and supports the mission and goals of the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development. However, these latter items can be learned quickly.

Candidate nomination petition and ballot request forms, and further information about the election process can be obtained from local SCD, USU Extension Service, and USDA Service Center officials, by calling (801-538-7171), emailing "agmain.jacobso@state.ut.us", or writing to the Utah Soil Conservation Commission, PO Box 146500, Salt Lake City, 84114-6500.

Contact: K. N. "Jake" Jacobson
Soil Conservation Program Specialist
Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
Phone: 801-538-7171

UTAH AG NEWS

January 2002



2002

UDAF Helps State Charitable Fund Set Donation Record

\$470,000 statewide pledged

UDAF Commissioner Cary G. Peterson and Marketing and Conservation Facilitator, Richard Sparks helped lead the statewide Charitable Donations campaign to new heights this year. The 2002 campaign received a record amount of pledges totaling \$470,815. The donations are made by state employees to dozens of charities.

Commissioner Peterson was the campaign's State Chairman during 2001. Sparks was the campaign treasurer, and was recently elected President of the Board of Directors for next year's campaign.

"There were many people throughout state government that helped make this a record year," said Commissioner Peterson. "This reinforces our reputation as a giving state, and I'm proud to be part of this effort," he added.

Sixty-one UDAF employees pledged to contribute \$4,616 to the program this coming year. This represents a 34 percent participation level—one of the highest contribution levels statewide.

UDAF Employees To Shift Work Hours During Winter Games

State employees throughout Utah are being encouraged to shift their daily work schedule during the 2002 Winter Olympic games to 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. The schedule change is intended to reduce traffic by 20 percent in Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah Counties during peak Olympic commute times. Not everyone will be asked to come in early. The department will still require a limited staff to service the traditional 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. business hours. Business still goes on, as brand certificates must be issued, money collected, pesticide handling tests given, and etc. The department expects fewer people though will come to the building during the 17 days of the Games.

The Department of Human Resource Management is granting a temporary exemption to rule R477-8-5, allowing employees to work through their lunchtime if they chose. Contact your director for more information.



Administrative Services employees (from left) Gordon Brown and Claudette Walcott were honored by Division Director, Renee Matsuura during the 2001 Service Awards luncheon in November.

TESTS SHOW UTAH ELK ARE CWD-FREE

Roosevelt, Utah – Thirty-four domestic elk from Utah ranches, which were recently destroyed because of fears of possible exposure to chronic wasting disease (CWD), have all tested negative for the disease. The elk, which are referred to as “trace-forward” elk, originated from a ranch in Colorado that had a confirmed case of CWD four years earlier. The elk were euthanized and tested for exposure in accordance with the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) CWD Eradication and Control Program.

The negative test results from Utah indicate that CWD has not been introduced to Utah by these elk. Negative test results were also reported on trace-forward elk in Idaho, New Mexico, and South Dakota.

“We are very pleased that these test results confirm that Utah’s domestic elk population does not have chronic wasting disease,” said Dr. Mike Marshall, State Veterinarian. “Utah has in place a very comprehensive set of procedures and regulations designed to prevent the spread of any livestock disease, and I’m happy to see the system worked,” Dr. Marshall added.

The Utah Elk Breeders Association has worked closely with the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food and the USDA, as well as the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources in the depopulation and testing of these elk. Testing was completed at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa.

As outlined in the protocols of the USDA CWD Eradication and Control program, affected ranchers will receive indemnity funding of up to \$3000 per animal for the depopulation of their elk. While this funding will help defray some of the losses sustained by depopulation, it is often significantly less than the actual value of the animals, which can each be worth \$75,000 or more.

“We are all very relieved that the test results came back negative. These results show that elk ranchers are taking the right steps to eliminate the disease from domestic elk,” said Ron Greene, Vice-President of the Utah Elk Breeders Association. “While it is painful for one of our ranchers to destroy his elk, it is the only way to be sure that none of them were infected,” Greene said.

Although research is ongoing to develop a live animal test for CWD, currently the disease can only be diagnosed through post-mortem testing of the elk’s brain stem. Statewide testing of 750 hunter harvested deer and elk in 1998-99 by the three agencies found no evidence of the disease in Utah’s wild population.

Elk breeders are confident that by complying with the USDA CWD program, they will be able to eliminate CWD quickly and effectively from domestic elk, in much the same way they eliminated tuberculosis and brucellosis.

The North American Elk Breeders Association took a leading role in formulating and drafting the current CWD program that has been adopted by the USDA and various state agencies.

For more information about CWD, please visit: www.ag.utah.gov or www.naelk.org, or call the UDAF at (801) 538-7162 or the NAEBA at (888) 431-3605.

